

Disability Services Newsletter

General Manager Update *Wendy Pettifer*

MAY 2021



May has been a busy month, and we've definitely felt the chill of the coming winter settle in. On the staff side we've been busy planning for the coming financial year, with lots of exciting developments which I really hope will improve everyone's experience of Woodville!

STAFFING

As I'm sure you are aware, Jenna has also temporarily left us to add to her lovely brood of children. Toby is once again stepping into her shoes and will be acting Disability Services Manager until her return in February

2022. We wish her the very best, and we will definitely let you know when the baby has safely arrived!

We've also started two new trainees – Rebecca and Nancy – who are settling in well. Trainees are provided with monthly onsite classroom-based training from our Registered Training Organisation partner, and are also put through a thorough induction by our team to ensure that they are safe to work with clients and not overwhelmed by all the new things they have to learn! We wish our trainees well, and welcome them to the team.

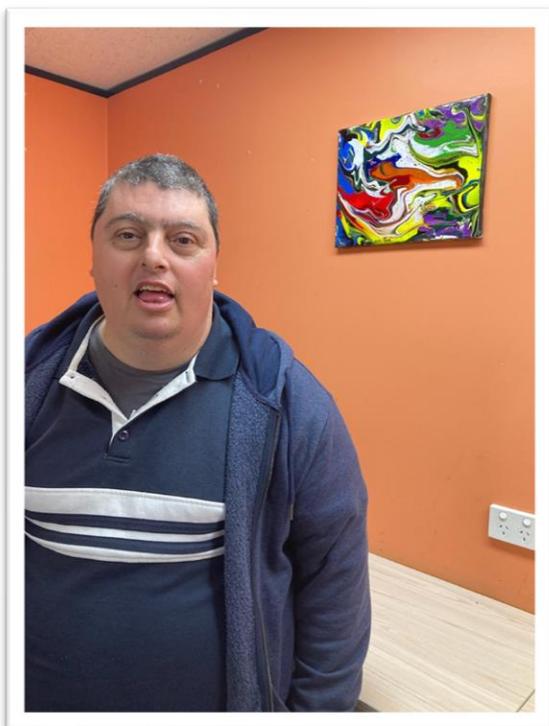
We are currently interviewing for staff specifically to work with clients with challenging behaviours. Work with these clients requires particular experience and temperament, and we want to increase the number of staff we have with these skills. We are also – as always – seeking to add to our casual pool of staff, and during the last month welcomed Sirivong to the team.

We are also about to advertise for two new roles. We have an increasingly large group of clients being provided with services in the community, and we are expanding into Supported Independent Living. We are therefore looking to recruit a Mentor (Community



and Accommodation Support) who will help us to develop this part of the organization.

We will also be recruiting a Behaviour Support Specialist, who will work directly with clients and staff on the floor to provide support, advice and training on managing challenging behaviours and the implementation of behaviour support plans. We are very excited about this role, as it will significantly enhance the experience of all our clients and staff.



HOLIDAYS!

At the time of writing, we have a very happy and excited group of clients enjoying the sights of Canberra. We keep in close contact with everyone whilst we have clients away, and this trip certainly seems to be being a success. This time, instead of taking our buses away, everyone has travelled by train – which is an exciting learning experience for the clients, and starts the trip off in a bit more of a relaxing way for staff. We'll have lots of photos to share in the June newsletter.

The success of our holidays has encouraged us to plan more for the coming year and we've also recognised that some clients need a shorter trip to test how they feel about being away from home in this way. With this in mind, we are now working on a 2-night Christmas in July trip up to the Blue Mountains, which will include a Christmas meal and lots of other Christmassy activities. We will provide more information about this shortly but you might want to put 28th – 30th July in your diaries!

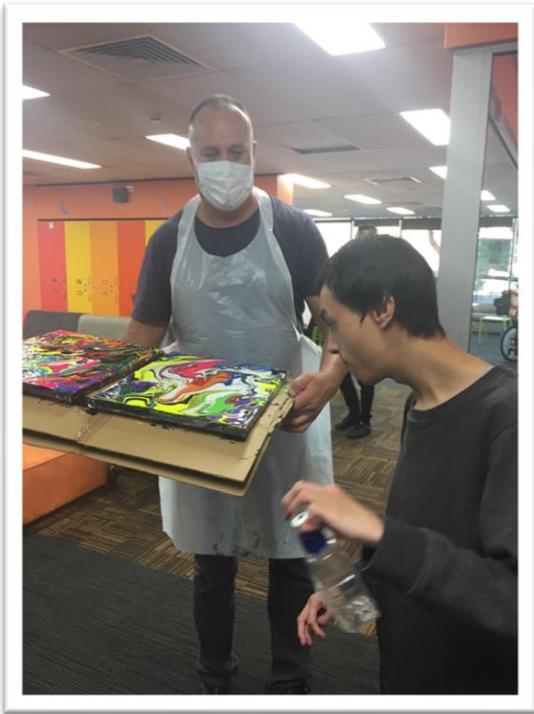
PLANS FOR THE NEW FINANCIAL YEAR!

This is the time of year when myself, Toby, Jenna and the finance team are busy working out the budget for the coming year. The budget for the 2021/22 financial year was ratified by the Board at the end of May, and we were pleased to have been able to include a number of initiatives designed to enhance our services.

We will be purchasing 3 new buses, and moving our two oldest buses – which will mean increasing our fleet to 10 vehicles. We will also be creating a new sensory room at Earth in the space which used to house the gym. The room will provide a quiet, low stimulation environment for clients who find the busy Earth centre overwhelming at times, and we are very excited to be able to provide this new environment.

We are also planning to replace some old and tired furniture in both Earth and Chester Hill, and hopefully – if we can do it within the





budget – to revamp the deck at Earth. Any philanthropic donations, or volunteers to help us with this – for example for decorating or gardening – would be greatly appreciated. Just get in touch with Toby or myself to discuss.

ACTIVITIES

New staff often means new activities available, and when we recruited Jan recently we really struck gold. As an ex-chef, he is now cooking healthy, delicious meals for and with Earth clients on Mondays, and is also sharing his artistic skills. As you can see, some beautiful works of art have been created!

As well as more recreational activities, we also have a keen focus on developing important life skills with clients – including basic numeracy skills, which play an important part in being able to manage money. Our client, Wendy, has been really impressing us with her 100% scores in math's activities, and she is rightly proud of her progress.

We are always looking for fun things to do, and I know that I'm certainly very excited about having a small petting farm come to visit us at Mandarin Street on June 16th! We will also be taking some clients to an access performing arts group starting in July and we are talking to a music program provider about bringing their program to Woodville. I'll be sending a letter out about that shortly.

We will also – finally – be starting up NightOwls trips again! Every time we think we are about to get restarted, there is a temporary increase in restrictions, but we are determined! Our first trip will be on Friday 25th June – so keep an eye out for details!

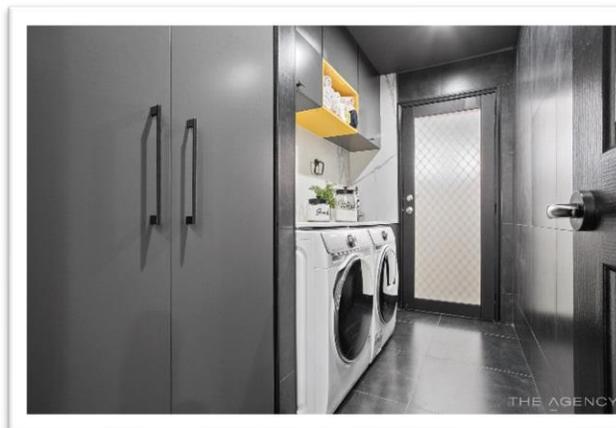
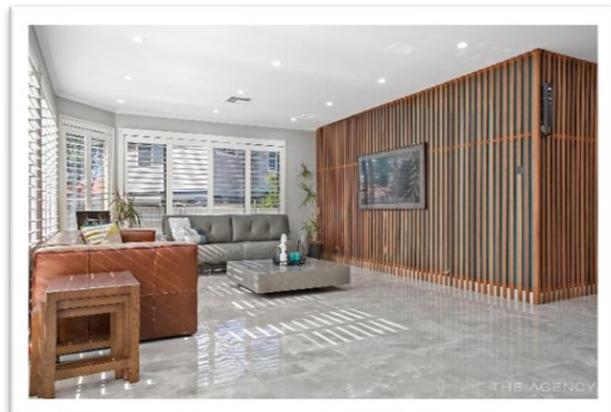
NEW FUNDING

We've been very fortunate to have been awarded a community grant by Fairfield City Council. The grant will help us to provide a series of training events for parents or carers of young people with intellectual disability, to support them in navigating developmental milestones such as testing boundaries, relationships, and sexuality. It will include information on behaviour support and how it can help parents and families manage their young person with an intellectual disability - with a focus on the challenges of this stage of development for people with behaviours of concern. We will be providing the sessions in partnership with ORS – who are the allied health provider who offer services upstairs from us at Mandarin Street. We've been working closely with them in support of some of our clients, and we are excited to start rolling out these events over the coming year.



SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL) and SDA

We are very excited to have signed on the dotted line for our beautiful supported independent living home in West Hoxton, and to have started to show around prospective residents. The house has 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, numerous living spaces and a large undercover area in the garden. It's on a lovely family street, and is in fabulous condition, as the photos show. We should be settling the sale in July, and then it will be full steam ahead to get it ready for our clients. It's a great start to what we hope will be at least a couple of Woodville



Alliance homes. Speak to either myself or Toby if you are interested in supported independent living.

We've also been working with an SDA (Specialist Disability Accommodation) provider who is developing 10 apartments for people with disability in Auburn. The apartments are in a block of 24 and will be a mixed community of people with and without disabilities. We will provide 24-hour support, through the NDIS, to the SDA apartments and as the properties have been so carefully designed we are very excited about this new development. They include fantastic assistive technology and lots of attention to detail for people requiring this type of accommodation. If you are interested in Specialist Disability Accommodation, or know someone else who is, please get in touch with Toby (0490 048 284) or myself (0448 976 271) for a chat.

Best wishes

Wendy

Email: wpettifer@woodville.org.au Phone: 0448 976 271

